

1: Layard

769, 575

Malekula OO12

[Information on ancestor worship and sodalities is partly covered by material in category 796. Data on the Maki ceremony, a religious rite held separately by men and women, and organized into grades, is to be found in that category.]

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184 island already referred to,¹ and, through their co-existence with the overt patrilineal organisation shared by the Small Islands with Ambrim and with all parts of Malekula, have produced in the Small Islands also a sectional organisation not found elsewhere in Malekula. The result of this organisation on the megalithic ritual of the Small Islands is to divide the whole population of any given patrilocal village into the two groups already mentioned, each of which alternately performs the rite; and this rite is consequently of such a protracted nature that the cycle of ritual observances accompanying it takes almost a generation to perform, the minimum period in Vao being some fifteen years, followed by an interval of several more years before the resources of the community have sufficiently recovered for the other group composed of alternate generations in the male line to shoulder the responsibility of, and reap the honours due to, its repetition. In Atchin the minimum period is even longer, the ritual cycle there lasting about thirty years.

MEGALITHIC RITE CALLED MAKI

Main characteristics.

769 This main megalithic rite is in the Small Islands called *Maki*, and its
 796 counterpart throughout the whole mat-skirt area of Malekula is called by variants of the same word, of which the best known is *Mangki*,² as recorded by Deacon from South-West Bay. It is on the one hand a "mystery" in the sense outlined in the Preface, based, like all mysteries, on a ritual re-birth, of which the outward and visible signs are here the taking of a new name and lighting of a new fire on which, or from brands taken from it, the food for the re-born individual's sustenance must be cooked. As a rule, also, during the period immediately following the culminating act of re-birth the celebrant ritually becomes a child, in that for a minimum of thirty days he may not cook his own food nor leave the holy place where he has taken up his abode. During this period of spiritual as well as physical retirement, though his food may be cooked, 1834
 784 with due precautions, by his wife, he abstains from sexual intercourse and observes many other taboos, one of the commonest of which is that he may not look on the sea. By these means he becomes at one also with the ancestral dead in whose footsteps through the observance of the rite he treads. The stone monuments he sets up are likewise erected not only for himself and, in the Small Islands, for all those who perform the rite with him, but also for those same ancestors who have performed it before him, and whose ghosts, together with his own after his death,

¹ See p. 3 and later on pp. 118 ff.

² In Deacon's posthumously published work this is referred to throughout as *Nimangki*, in which *ni-* is only the indefinite article and is therefore redundant. For other variants of this word see p. 692.

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hover near them and are commemorated by them. Closely connected with this is the propitiatory aspect of the rite, which is at the same time a prophylactic against the wrath of all ancestors as constellated in the figure of a devouring Guardian Ghost. In the closely associated megalithic ritual in South Raga described by Tattevin,¹ those demanding special propitiation are the male representatives of the maternal line such as the mother's brother and the mother's mother's brother, whose favoured position under the former system of matrilineal descent has been undermined and to a large extent overthrown by the system of overt patrilineal descent, that, coming from the south, is the dominating feature of the latest cultural wave to have overtaken this part of Melanesia and the distribution of which in the North-Central New Hebrides coincides very closely with that of the Maki. In this sense the Maki also is a kinship rite of the highest significance, and in its component sub-rites also includes the ritual payment of debts to a great number of living relatives, chief among whom are the mother's brother and the wife's father.

Coupled with this is the effort to achieve immortality implicit in the attempt to ward off the evil activities of the Guardian Ghost, who is an earthbound creature guarding the cave through which the ghost of the dead man must pass on his way to the Land of the Dead, and who will devour him if not duly propitiated by the lifelong performance of these rites, supported by sacrifices performed by the dead man's kinsman during the ritual carried out at his death, and by the further presentation of a gift by the ghost of the dead man himself. This effort to escape the annihilating influence of the grave and rise superior to earthly considerations is further expressed in the identification of each individual performing the rite with the mythical hawk who presides over the rites and whose image adorns the shrines built in honour of the ancestral ghosts as well as the place of retreat to which the celebrants retire after their ritual re-birth.

Every step in this ritual is further accompanied by singing and dancing of the most elaborate kind expressing the whole gamut of emotions, accompanied by rhythms played on an orchestra of slit gongs formed from tree trunks hollowed out by means of a longitudinal slit. These gongs, many feet higher than a man, are in Malekula planted upright in the ground, and are carved at the top to represent a face of which the upper end of the slit takes the place of the mouth. These gongs thus represent the ancestral voices urging and encouraging the living to dance themselves into that state of communal ecstasy that banishes personal affects and brings them into communion with collective forces passed on from the long line of those now dead, who have themselves performed these rites, to their representatives now living and dancing, and to the issue of these still to come.

¹ See p. 721.

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184 introduction of firearms to the natives by unscrupulous Whites, whereby
 177 the Small Islanders, who were the first to acquire these weapons, succeeded in exterminating almost the whole of the once numerous population inhabiting the villages on the adjacent Malekulan coast.¹ This tragedy, now bitterly regretted by the Small Islanders themselves, has prevented any further enquiry as to how these two villages themselves acquired the rites. I do not know the actual date of this extermination. It cannot, however, have occurred very long ago, and in the generations preceding it a mass of ritual practices emanating from these two villages had already been acquired by Wala, whence a great deal has since been acquired in turn by Atchin but only a certain amount by Vao, and that only by the villages on one side of this island. This is one of the reasons why, as stated in the Preface, I have chosen Vao as the subject for this first volume in order to establish the historical sequence of cultures on these islands. Where this megalithic culture came from it is not the business of this work to discuss, and, except as regards a few outstanding features, the historical aspect of the problem is not mentioned.

Genealogical records and their connexion with stone monuments.

173 One relevant fact must nevertheless be mentioned because of
 554 its effect on the natives' own outlook. This is the sense of historical
 769 continuity possessed by the natives of the Small Islands, in which they
 796 differ notably from any other known tribes in this part of Melanesia, and which is expressed and fostered by their extensive orally transmitted genealogical records. I have already called attention to the fact that the cycle of rites comprising one performance of the Maki lasts approximately a generation, and to the stone monuments erected during each such performance. These monuments are never removed, and remain as a perpetual memorial of those who set them up. Each such performance is moreover distinguished from all others by some outstanding feature by means of which those taking part in it hope to eclipse in magnificence all previous performances, either by the acquirement of some new form of ritual or in the grandeur of the stones erected or, most impressive of all, by the number of boars sacrificed and by their value in terms of the elongation of their tusks. It is as a rule in accordance with this latter form of emulation that each Maki performance is named, these names, such as "The Circle-Tusker" or "The Five Hundred," referring to the quality or number of boars sacrificed, being treasured by the natives of each village as part of the historical heritage enhancing their own prestige. Not only is each Maki remembered, however, but also the leading men who organised it and carried it through, by means of the monoliths erected and at which some of the chief tuskers are sacrificed. Details of these sacrifices are also remembered, since, with

¹ See p. 602.

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the progressive increase in skill in the rearing of tuskers (another feature to be discussed later), these have on the whole improved in quality during each successive generation, and the memory of these improvements, resulting in ever greater curvature of the tusks, adds to the prestige of those who sacrificed them and also to that of their descendants. These facts, handed down from father to son, together with the ancestral stone monuments standing in every village dancing-ground, form a historical framework by the aid of which the natives of the Small Islands preserve a mass of information regarding their past history, and of the personalities and exploits of their ancestors. Since most of the facts so preserved are centred round the successive performances of the Maki, there can be no doubt at all that this historical sense is part and parcel of the megalithic culture it represents. There is also very little doubt that it is closely connected with patrilineal descent, for in Vao, where patrilineal descent has been comparatively recently introduced and the dolmen representing the female principle is still the chief monument erected, the genealogies do not go back more than nine generations. In Atchin, on the contrary, where patrilineal influence is stronger and monoliths representing the male principle have largely supplanted the former use of the dolmen as the chief sacrificial monument, they go back nineteen generations to the slaying by two brothers of an aboriginal man-eating ogre named Ias associated with an older layer of culture, memories of which still survive in South Raga, where legends are told of mythical baby-snatchers called *ias*, and the same word is used also as an honourable title for successful killers of men.¹ The two Atchin brothers said to have killed Ias nineteen generations ago were clearly the last representatives on this island of the former system of overt matrilineal descent, since their successor Iwas was their sister's son, and it was this man Iwas who introduced the existing system of overt patrilineal descent through which the inhabitants of the chief village on this now patrilocal island trace kinship with him, the youngest boy at the time of my visit belonging to the seventeenth generation of his descendants in the direct male line.

"STONE MEN"

The importance of monoliths in tracing descent is due almost certainly to the fact discussed on p. 699, that these monuments, now consisting of plain coral blocks, for the most part undressed, represent what at one time in the history of this culture were stone statues carved to represent the dead. Thus some of the monoliths erected for the higher ranks in the district of Senliang in South-West Bay (which in turn were derived,

¹ Tattevin, 1, 1926, pp. 409, 410; also 2, 1931, Tales XXIX, p. 879 and XXX, pp. 880-1. The same personage figures in the mythology of Oba as the man-eating ogre Taso (Codrington, 3, pp. 398-402).

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pudding placed on those that remain. On this are then replaced the stones that have been removed, and the whole covered in with earth. Here the pudding remains till it is judged to have been cooked. For a large ceremonial pudding on a ritual occasion it may be left in all night or even, for the very largest, as long as twenty-four hours. Whatever time the cooking takes, it is judged always to a nicety, and the resulting food is tender and succulent. We are here concerned, however, only with ordinary occasions, when the pudding is taken out soon after it is put in. Fresh leaves are brought on which to lay it, and the meal is ready. On rainy days it is consumed inside the Lodge. But on fine days—and most days are fine—it is eaten outside, the men squatting on their haunches in usual Small Island style, or perhaps sitting on a handy log. The pudding is sliced with wooden knives and eaten either with the bare hand or taken up with a leaf. When finished, what is left over is kept to be eaten cold next morning, and the cooking-leaves fed to the pigs.

Fellowship with the dead.

All this takes place either within or immediately outside the Lodge, within the Lodge enclosure a few feet from where, lined with stones, lie the graves of the ancestral dead. Much has been written of the fear of the dead in primitive religion, and it is curious that it is this aspect of ancestor cult that has been most emphasised by European writers. As Rivers points out, there appear to exist in Melanesia two diametrically opposed attitudes towards the dead, that of the early inhabitants, which was one of great fear, and that of later immigrants, who believed in their ever-present beneficent influence and so tried in all manner of ways to preserve contact with them.¹ In the Small Islands it is true that in some respects the ancestors are very much to be feared, and that their anger is held to be one of the main causes of disease or even death. But this is only when they have been offended by the neglect of ancestral respect, either on the part of the whole community as a result of the change in kinship regulations whereby the introduction of overt patrilineal descent has deprived the matrilineal ancestors of much of their former prestige, or on the part of individuals who have neglected their private offerings at the ancestral graves, or by the too bold introduction of innovations in mortuary ritual or in some other way have offended particular ghosts. It has already been noted how expiation of the communal sin brought about by the change in kinship regulations is one of the most important factors in the huge sacrifices performed during the ritual of the Maki, but we shall see later that it is through these very sacrifices that the living gain fellowship with the dead by ensuring their own future existence in the land where the dead continue to live. Private offences are similarly expiated by sacrifice or the discontinuance of the practices to

¹ Rivers, 1, vol. II, p. 279.

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769 which the ghosts have taken exception. Apart from these more or less normal occurrences, special types of ghost are particularly liable to cause misfortune, chief among which are the ghosts of those slain in battle, who, lacking due burial rites, are unable to meet the demands of the Guardian Ghost for the gift of a pig sacrificed at their grave, and so wander unsatisfied seeking to wreak vengeance on whom they may find. These exceptions, however, but serve to prove the rule that it is because they have lacked the normal loving care bestowed on the dead, together with the opening of the door to the future life that these sacrifices represent, that their unhappiness drives them to such acts.

For the normal attitude towards the dead in the Small Islands, far from being one of fear, is, once these duties have been performed, one of admiration and gratitude for benefits received during their lifetime and for the yet greater benefits it is hoped to receive from them after their death. For, just as the dead depend for their well-being on the continued sacrifices made to them by the living, so also do the living depend on the dead for their power over the unseen forces that rule their existence, such as their continued health and prosperity, the fertility both of themselves and of their pigs, the sunshine and rain that favour their crops, and the winds that can bring success or disaster to their voyages in their sea-going canoes. Thus ancestors constantly appear in dreams to advise or dissuade, and most major forms of magic contain some sort of appeal to them and derive efficacy from this fact.

While an element of fear certainly pervades the native attitude towards them, it is, however, the kind of fear that is better expressed by the word awe. For if fear in the degraded sense in which it is often used to express only an uncomfortable emotion were the ruling attitude, we should not find the centre of male communal life in each joint-family to be the Lodge built by the side of the very cemetery where the ancestral dead lie, nor should we be able to explain the numerous communion feasts held during the mortuary rites which the dead man of high rank himself shares by receiving morsels of food dropped down a bamboo tube leading to his mouth. At other times, as during voyages, when the ancestors are supposed to accompany and protect them, communion feasts are held which they are believed to share. At home the place where men feel safest is in the Lodge in closest proximity to their graves. This is their natural gathering-place, where they deliberate on all family affairs, sit about at odd times, and have their meals. Here also old men, whose mating time is past, are wont to sleep, close to the dead they soon will join.

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distributed—each one being called by name—the yams piled on the ground. The tall decorated bamboo poles are assigned to those families which are most closely related to the bride. Each family takes its departure as soon as it has received its share; this filing past of guests presents an interesting and animated scene . . . the rite has cast an air of festivity both over the scene and over the people; a traditional act has been performed and no hitch has occurred; the people are pleased.

Ancestors.

"The ancestors, if they see us, will be satisfied with us, because we have accomplished it well." This is the question after every rite: "Are the ancestors satisfied with what we have just done?" "Yes, because we have done as they did." Their greatest spiritual pleasure comes from this declaration: "Our ancestors are satisfied with us because we do as they did: we continue [their work]."

Bride's female maternal relatives invited to wedding feast, but refuse, and leave.

While each one is returning to his home, dragging his pig or carrying her load of yams, while the young boys gather the gay flowers that have fallen from the tall bamboos to adorn their heads, while the noise of the crowd grows distant and becomes diffused, what has become of the pretty wife, the young bride with her scarlet paint, whom the sight of so much riches just now made so proud? And her ladies-in-waiting, where are they? Neither she nor her little court of grave matrons have moved; they are still sitting in a circle in the same place. But here comes a crowd to visit them. These are the mothers, the grandmothers,¹ the aunts, the sisters and the female cousins of the young husband who come to invite them to a grand wedding feast this same evening. Thereupon, those seated all rise; the bride's mother makes her excuses, the grandmothers and aunts likewise; have they not to prepare supper for their lords and masters, and that now?

The young wife now takes tender leave of her mother, and of all her maternal relatives; tears flow on all sides without the slightest effort; they all press her hands, cover the young wife with touching and sincere caresses, and finally go.

Bride formally appropriated by husband's clan.

Then the husband's relatives surround the young girl, and lead her in front of the house of a widow,² closely related to the husband. It is this act of appropriation of the newly married girl by her husband's clan, an act to which she herself consents, which signifies her acquiescence in the new state of life imposed upon her; soon she will give open proof of

¹ See note 2, p. 196.

² It is not clear who this relative is. Probably the wife of a deceased father's brother or father's father.

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X796 of the great sacrifice, *Taur Na-mbat* is danced by the members of this "line" every night and all night long, with the exception of the penultimate night, when it ceases at midnight in order to afford some rest for the participants in view of the twenty-four hours' ceaseless rites beginning with *Taur Na-mbat* at dusk on the Eve of the great sacrifice until the final consummation at sundown the following day. Parties from all the other Vao villages and from the mainland and the neighbouring Small Islands come also to dance with them in due order on certain nights, but this is not like the usual dancing in rotation, since, as will be seen, it is combined with the delivery of presentation-pigs at the home-village, and these parties dance only for a short time, leaving it to the men of the introducing "line" to carry on the dance till dawn.

Ancestral image surmounted by hawk-image erected in front of dolmen and the whole shrine so formed is roofed.

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532 Some time during this period, about ten days before the Sacrificial Day, a wooden ancestor-image is erected in front of the dolmen, and, resting on it, a ridge-pole formed of the trunk of a small tree whose buttress roots are carved to represent the head and wings of a hawk. This ridge-pole supports a roof which covers the dolmen, transforming the whole monument into a shrine. I have unfortunately no record of the rites accompanying its erection.

MEASURES TAKEN TO ENSURE THE PRESENCE OF THE CORRECT NUMBER AND GRADE OF TUSKED BOARS FOR THE MASS SACRIFICE

This period is also one of intense activity directed towards ensuring the proper supply of sacrificial animals. The very finest tuskers of all, those which are to confer the highest ranks, such as *Melteg-amu* and *Melteg-aul*, on those chief Maki-men who sacrifice them at the dolmen itself, are bred at home, preferably from sows owned by the sacrificer himself. Since no man, however, actually possesses at any one moment a great number of tuskers, and the economic scheme is based largely on presentations and the most complicated system of credits and debts, many, if not the greater number, of the 100 tusked boars to be sacrificed at the stakes do not enter the sacrificer's possession till they are presented to him on the actual day of sacrifice. Chief among these are those valuable tuskers which are due for presentation to him by his relatives-by-marriage, most notably by his daughters' husbands and his brothers-in-law, during the rite of "circling" that immediately precedes the sacrifice. These have, it will be remembered, previously been bargained for at great length, the exact curvature of tusk being specified and often the actual animal agreed on; and the intending sacrificer has, moreover, already done, or should have done, his part by giving the prospective

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764 bodies, however, are distributed among the members of the various villages on the island. According to Godefroy, ten of the dead man's coconuts are cut down to provide him with drink. The fruit of these demolished coconut trees may not be touched by the living.

NO ATEAN

The rite called *Atean*, performed at the death of a young man, is not included here, for this rite is a sign of sorrow, and "we do not mourn for an old man."

FIFTH DAY

In the mortuary rites of almost all peoples of the Northern New Hebrides the Fifth Day after death is one of the most important, since it is on this day that in the older layer of culture associated with burial in the squatting position and with the dolmen-Maki the dead man's period of probation ends and he is admitted with full rights into the land of the dead. Thus, in Raga, it is said that Suqe "would have men die only for five days,"¹ and in many districts, including the Small Island of Wala, the ghost, who is thought to remain close to his home for the first few days after burial, is finally chased away on the Fifth Day.

In Vao, as we have seen, there is some confusion as to whether the journey to the volcano on Ambrim takes five or ten days. The rites, however, point to five as the correct number, for it is on the Fifth Day after death that the mortuary officials and also the sons and other close kinsmen of the dead man blacken themselves all over in token of his arrival. At the same time yet another pig is sacrificed, whose ghost is said to be presented by the dead man to the ghostly ferryman who ferries him over to Ambrim.

It is for this reason that, in the case of the burial of an old man in the squatting position, there is no rite corresponding to that of *Ber-mavel*² performed in the case of a young man buried in the extended position, which takes place on the Seventh Day after death, since the seven-day period of probation is connected exclusively with this latter form of burial.

MATEAN: "DEATH FEAST"

769 Movable feast. Must precede nightly dancing leading to rites of Fourteenth Day.

We have just seen the importance of the Fifth Day after death as being that which, in the older layer of culture, terminates the ghost's period of probation, after which he is admitted with full rights into the land of the dead. On this quinary basis has been built up in many parts of the Northern New Hebrides a system of mortuary feasts held at intervals

¹ Codrington, 3, p. 169.

² See p. 360.

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of five or ten days over a protracted period, with a general release of mourning taboos ending as a rule on the 100th day but sometimes lasting till the 1000th. This method of reckoning days in multiples of ten is so marked a feature of mortuary ritual that such numbers (with the exception of 30, due to the phases of the moon), and particularly 100, are almost invariably found throughout this area to be connected somehow or other with death. In Malekula and the Small Islands it is closely connected (as we have already seen) with the monolith-Maki, but much less so with the dolmen-Maki such as is practised on Vao. It is presumably for this reason that it is less prominent on Vao than elsewhere.

There are, however, certain movable feasts that in no area fit in with this decimal reckoning. Most notable among these is the rite called *Matean*, which is the Vao form of the word meaning literally "Death Feast." Rites bearing this name have been recorded from various parts of Malekula, dialectical variations being *ni-mesian* in Seniang,¹ *ni-masian* in Lambumbu² and, in the Small Islands, *metsen* in Atchin. A case is reported by Deacon in which the rite was performed in Lambumbu on the day after burial. In Seniang the date is variable, the feast in one case being held five days after the corpse was laid on the stretcher. These are but minor variations, for on Atchin the rite, there carried out on a most spectacular scale, may be performed as late as two years after death. It is, moreover, not unusual in the Small Islands for a great man to have it performed before his death so that he may himself take part in his own mortuary rites and make sure that they are correctly performed. One such occurrence on Vao has already been referred to on p. 236. I myself recorded others from Atchin.³ Some of the more spectacular aspects of the later forms of the rite have already begun to be acquired by the Inferior Side of Vao by purchase from Atchin. To such an extent has this form of the rite become ritually degraded in the interests of display that during my visit three old men belonging to the village of Singon on this side of Vao "made *metsen*" (the Atchin form of the rite) together at one and the same time. This was done on account of the extreme expense involved, not only in the actual feasts given, but also in the payment due to the sellers. The more important aspects of the rite had been purchased some time before, but the old men had still not bought the right to dance the Atchin dance called *Wenen*. This they now did. The sellers were the adult members of the village of Emil Parav on the Inferior Side of Atchin, who came in a body to teach the dance and its accompanying songs. As often happens, there was a dispute over the price paid, and the sellers returned home to Atchin highly dissatisfied with the pigs they had

¹ Deacon, 4, p. 525.

² Ibid., 4, pp. 566-7.

³ Thus also in Matanavat a man "may yet live long after the death feast . . . (after which) he will rest and be ready easily to die. . . . The pigs have made ready his path of the spirit and opened the road of hereafter past the hungry devil *Le-sev-sev*, who waits there seeking to eat those who cannot give pigs" (Harrison, 2, p. 58).

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received and threatened to take them back to the Singon folk and so annul their right to perform the dance. At the time of my visit, however, this threat had not been carried out.

As a rule, however, the old form of the rite as performed on the Superior Side of Vao is carried out shortly after death and prior to the nightly dancing that leads up to the events that take place on the Fourteenth Day; but the return feast called *Mate-vuho*, when those who have eaten the various parts of the pigs killed during the *Matean* Death Feast bring yams for their hosts, does not occur until a year or two later.¹

Return of dead man's soul to his mother's village.

One of the striking features of this Death Feast on Vao is the dramatic representation of the return of the dead man's soul to his mother's village. The same feature occurs in Lambumbu, where a special pig is presented to the dead man's mother's brother, partly "in recognition of the general indebtedness of the deceased to his maternal uncle throughout his life," and partly owing to "the belief that at death a man returns to the village of his mother's brother." The same motive governs the gift of a pig to the maternal uncle during the purchase of one of the objects connected with the *Mangki*² in the same district "to ensure that at his death the buyer's soul shall go to the village of his mother's people."³ Instances of a similar belief are cited by Tattevin from South Raga.⁴ The same motive appears in the birth rites carried out at Matanavat on the north coast of Malekula, where the child's relatives ask the maternal uncle, "'Where did this little thing come from?' And the maternal uncle says: 'From my village.' For the mother is of his clan, and it is the child of his place."⁵

EVE OF THE MATEAN: RITE CALLED OMBU NA-UL

Review of pigs. Song of the Founder of the Maki.

On the Eve of the Death Feast there is performed a special rite called *Ombu na-ul*. I do not know the meaning of *ombu*, but *na-ul* means the "return of the dead."

All the pigs to be killed for the *Matean* on the following day are reviewed by being tied to posts erected within the Lodge enclosure. Then all present give voice to the song sung by To-wewe, founder of the Maki, as he and his sister were about to sacrifice the Maki of *tawd* kernels and later as he went to his death in the hollow trunk of the *nev* tree.⁶ Other songs are sung relating to the Maki and to the ghosts of the departed. At the end of the singing those present all pretend to laugh, and then to cry. Then they all cry out "i . . . i . . . i . . . i" four times.

¹ See p. 536.² Deacon, 4, p. 351.³ Harrison, 2, pp. 41-2.⁴ Form of the word Maki (see p. 692).⁵ Tattevin, 1, 1927, p. 93.⁶ See p. 286.

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Finally the leader cries "*Ia*," and is answered "*Ia*" by all assembled, and this too must be done four times.¹ 769

"*Dead man*" speaks from his grave, saying he has come from his mother's village.

Then one of the men of the home-village lights the special torch here called *ombu na-ul*, and with it enters the hut built over the grave of the dead man. One of those outside calls out "*O hoi*" four times, with a pause between each cry, and he who is in the hut replies "*O ho*." The man outside calls "*We hambe me?*" "Where do you come from?", and he inside replies "*No we N . . . me*," "I come from N . . .," mentioning the village of the dead man's mother. Then he pretends to cry four times, and those outside weep aloud, after which he comes out from the hut and is presented with a small live pig.

That evening a pudding with fowls in it, which has been cooked in the Lodge, is divided up, part being eaten by members of the dead man's Lodge, and further pieces being sent to each of the remaining Lodges in the village. In explaining the reason why this pudding was cooked in the case of an old man, but not in that of a young one, my informant came out with the characteristic statement already quoted that "at the death of a young man we are sorry that his life has been cut off, so we fast. But for an old man, his time is finished and it is right that he should die, so we do not mourn."

DAY OF MATEAN

Next day is that of the *Matean* Death Feast. There is no dancing, as there is on the corresponding occasion on Atchin. Attached- and lone-yams are laid out in the dancing-ground, one for each Quarter of the two home-villages and one for each of the other villages represented. Pigs are now killed for the assembled visitors; if plentiful, then one for each "Side of the Lodge"; if only a moderate number are available, one for each Quarter; and if scarce, then only one for each village. These pigs are called by the special name *ghoagh*, and those who have eaten the different cuts from them must return with yams at the feast of *Mete-vuho* held a year or two later.

Pig called ne-numbe sacrificed for mother's brother's son.

Then a large pig is sacrificed and given to the dead man's mother's brother's son (*netun soghon*). This pig is called by a special name, *ne-numbe*. (In my account of the death of a young man it was said that even this part of the rite is not observed so strictly as on Atchin, sometimes only a small pig being sacrificed for this relative, while the large pig is given to the dead man's "great friend." I do not know whether this applies

¹ The number 4 signifies "completion" (see p. 644).

769 also in the case of an old man. In this account it is also stated that other pigs, both dead and alive, the former called *no-numbo* and the latter *wol-wolean*, are given to the dead man's "friends" "in payment for his death.") The sacrificial signal is sounded on the gongs for the death of the pig killed for the mother's brother's son.

It is said that the mortuary officials break their seclusion in order to attend this rite.

Nightly dancing leading up to the Fourteenth Day.

Beginning usually on the night of the *Matsen* Death Feast, or as soon after as possible, parties from all the Vao villages come at intervals in due rotation (*or tams vana*) to dance in the dancing-ground of the dead man's village. The guests may choose which they like from among the dance-cycles called *Tunen*, the Rail dance (*Pilagh*) and the variety of *Banana-Leaves* dance called *Kò-kòke ru-mbulatan*. This dancing (*Veluan*) leads up to the important rite held on the Fourteenth Day called *Lok Na-lang*, during which a model mortuary canoe is launched with provisions for the dead man's ghost, and finally lands up at his mother's village. Of the three dances mentioned, the most important is *Tunen*, danced on the last night, that is to say on the Eve of the Fourteenth Day, by the members of the dead man's village.

EVE OF THE FOURTEENTH DAY

ULUNGE, "WOODEN PILLOW"

Dead man's wooden pillow taken to his mother's village.

On the Eve of the Fourteenth Day after death takes place the ceremony called *Ulunge*, or "Wooden pillow,"¹ which consists in returning this intimate possession, on which the dead man during his lifetime rested his honoured head, to the dead man's mother's village.

The dead man's brothers and other male kinsmen on the paternal side all proceed to his mother's village, taking with them a young unmarried girl who carries the dead man's pillow strapped to her back by means of a dancing-mat called *no-sal*.² They all dance *Pilagh* in the dancing-ground of the mother's village, while two of their number construct a small hut called *no-hima na M* . . . , *M* being the name of the deceased. When the dance is over, the pillow is placed inside this hut, and a money-mat (*mangau*) on its roof, after which the visitors proceed to cut down some valuable tree, such as a coconut or a bread-fruit, belonging to the mother's village.³

¹ Compare Mota *ulunga*, *ilinga*, Tikopia *wunga*, all meaning "pillow." Codrington, (3, p. 282) describes a mortuary feast on Maewo and Raga called *Ulogi*, but translates this "The howling."

² *Achin no-sal*.

³ Presumably to provide the dead man with food.

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The girl who had carried the pillow remains in the mother's village, where she must remain for a year, fasting (*taur*) and abstaining from sexual intercourse. This is the reason for the choice of an unmarried girl, since she would have less temptation to infringe the last of these restrictions.

On their departure the visitors are loaded by the mother's people with gifts of money-mats and yams.

Confirmation of this Vao custom comes from Atchin, with the additional information that the hut is constructed on the stone-platform erected during the second part of the Maki in the dead man's mother's village, and that his fan as well as his wooden pillow is deposited within it.

The account I received was in connexion with the recent death of a man called Melteg-ghirighiri-maki, who was Speaker of the Vao village of Togh-vanu. His mother was a woman of the Lodge *Melünbek* in the Atchin village of Olep, one of the twin-villages which, together called Ruruar, form the Superior Side of that island (she does not figure in my genealogy of the Lodge). This man was ill for two months before he died, and before his death he sent for Melteg-samen and Melteg-wes, both men of his mother's Lodge whom he called *natuk*, "son," and gave to each of them a live pig, the purpose of which I do not know, though it was presumably in order to ensure the correct carrying out of the programme in his mother's village. After his death, his mother's relatives from Olep went to Vao and killed three pigs.

The pillow, in Atchin called *no-ul-el*, carried on her back by the dead man's brother's daughter, and the fan (*ne-rib*)¹ are said to have been brought to Atchin, not on the Eve of the Fourteenth Day but on the Tenth Day after death. This, however, may be a mistake, owing to analogy with the patrilineal decimal system of dating on that island. The visitors danced the Rail dance called *Pila* (corresponding to the Vao *Pilagh*) from the beach at Onema through the dancing-grounds of Olep and Pweter-tsuts, to the house of Melteg-rum, the dead man's mother's brother, though this man was no longer alive, and his house was falling to pieces. Then they returned to the Olep dancing-ground called N'amal Para, where they built on the stone-platform a hut with rafters projecting in the manner called *tsin* ("bones"), and deposited in it the dead man's pillow and fan, and on the roof a woman's dancing-mat called *ne-tsal*.²

With regard to the cutting down of fruit trees in the village of the dead man's mother and the subsequent rewarding of the marauders, an amusing instance of the workings of culture-contact occurred during the recent celebrations connected with the death of Melteg-hangawul, of Togh-vanu.

¹ Made of a small coconut leaf with the fronds bent back and plaited into one another.

² In the Vao account, it is stated that the mat placed on the roof is a money-mat (*mangau*). The Atchin *ne-tsal* is equivalent to the Vao *ne-sal*, by means of which, according to the Vao account, the girl carries the pillow.

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769 This man's mother also came from the village of Olep, on Atchin, where this rite is not indigenous. In spite of the fact that this was by no means the first occasion when this portion of the Vao ritual had been performed on Atchin, the Atchinese have never seen the point of having to pay for the destruction of their trees. They could not prevent it, but were not going to pay, and the visitors returned to Vao empty-handed and hungry.

FOURTEENTH DAY

We now come to the celebrations connected with the Fourteenth Day after death. Fourteen is an unusual number in New Hebridean culture, and I can offer no explanation of what it signifies. The rites performed consist of:

- (1) The planting of a special yam and banana, which are surrounded by a fence and left to rot.
- (2) The eating of a pudding called *lok na-lang* in a special hut erected in the dancing-ground.
- (3) The launching of a canoe with provisions, clothing and luxuries for the dead man, which is finally towed in to the dead man's mother's village and there placed on a stone-platform.
- (4) On this day also the twice-daily communion with the dead man ceases; the assistant mortuary officials (but not their chief) are released from their duties; and the dead man's patrilineal kinswomen who have been keeping company with the mortuary officials in the Lodge return to their respective husbands living in other villages.

Banana and special yam planted.

The first act, which takes place on the Eve of the rite (which as usual begins at sundown) is the planting, by the brothers and sons of the dead man, at a certain spot on the Upper Side of the dancing-ground, of a banana tree and of a yam of a special kind called *bihure*. Round these is erected a circular fence called *na-lit*, made of groups of reeds (*martunare*) arranged in a diamond pattern and hung with red amaranthus flowers. The work of preparing the reeds, by stripping off all the leaves except the top ones, is done by the married sisters of these men—the *vens na wooran* whom we have seen playing such a prominent part in the proceedings. The leaves left on the top of the reeds form a gracefully drooping crown to the fence, which can be seen in the middle of the panorama of the Pete-hul dancing-ground (see Frontispiece and Plate XVI). The fruit of the banana is left to ripen and fall, and the yam to rot in the ground—no one will eat them—and the fence is left to decay.

This act is performed only in the case of a very old man (*mer-sean*) or of a *ta-mat môt* (deceased *na-humbe*) who has nearly reached the age of a *mer-sean*. It is connected also in some way with the performance of the

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supreme sacrifice on the stone-platform at High Maki, those only who have performed this sacrifice being rewarded after death in this way. I was unable to find out the meaning of the act, though later information points to the fact that it is probably connected with the belief held on Wala that the dead man himself plants a banana tree in the land of the dead.¹ A banana tree is planted also during rites giving entrance to certain grades in the Nalawan ghost society in Senieng.²

The na-lang pudding.

During this same evening there is constructed also a special hut called *na-him a na-lok na-lang*. In the case of an old man for whom a banana tree has been planted, this hut will be placed close to it on the Upper Side of the dancing-ground. When no banana tree has been planted, the hut will be constructed by the side of the road, as during the mortuary rites for a young man.

The name given to the hut means "house of the *na-lang* pudding," referring to a pudding of this name eaten in it on the following day. I am unfortunately unable to translate this word, but it seems probable that it is related to *rien long*, the name given in Laravat in North-Central Malekula to a special enclosure erected as a *piet-d-terre* for the ghost "to reside in during the haunting period after the decease, so that it may not molest those dwelling in the house. The ghost is feared, and this is in part a dodge to trick it and keep it from visiting the houses of the village. Considerable uneasiness is felt about going past this structure at night."³

That evening a fowl is cooked and placed in the special pudding from which the hut takes its name. This is cooked, not in the Lodge, but in the house of the dead man himself. It is so large that two or three men are engaged in preparing it. When made, it is placed in the earth-oven to cook all night in readiness for the following morning.

During the night *Tunen* is danced in the dancing-ground by the men of the home-village, the last in the rotation of villages that have danced there at nightly intervals since the *Matean* Death Feast.

Next morning, in plain daylight, those who had made the pudding go into the dead man's house where it has been cooking all night, and carry it openly to the Lodge, preceded by another man blowing alternate short and long blasts on a conch.

Meanwhile, all the other men of the Quarter have been up since dawn making puddings, each one for himself, in his own house. These are left to cook, and on the sound of the conch-shell trumpet the men all assemble in the Lodge, whence the special pudding is now carried to the hut set up on the previous evening, and there consumed. This is, however, *not* a communion feast, and there is therefore no compulsion to eat, and its exact purpose remains obscure.

¹ Layard, 4, p. 126.

² Deacon, 4, p. 393.

³ Ibid., 4, p. 576.

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Model canoe launched with provisions for the dead man.

769 We now come to the main business of the day. This is called *ra se nu-wak na mer-sean*, "we launch the old man's canoe." This refers to a small model canoe, five or six feet long, sent out to sea with provisions and clothing for the deceased. The canoe itself is manufactured on the previous day by the men, while the strips for the sail are, as in the case of a full-size canoe, made by the women. In this case the women who make the sail are those of the dead man's kinswomen called *vene na woroan*. It is only these women who are allowed to take part in the work. Women married into the village (*vene na laghean*) may not take part, nor may girls born in the village but who are not yet nubile.

It is not possible here to discuss all the instances of canoe burial or of setting the body adrift in a canoe that occur throughout Oceania, and with which this Vao rite may in some way be connected.¹ In Vao, however, the body has already been interred, so that, whatever may be the origin of the rite, it is now concerned not with the body but with the soul.

After eating the special pudding, the dead man's near kinsmen now carry this model canoe down to the shore, while those who accompany it dance *weluen na nu-wak tembe*, "dance of the canoe running before the wind," and sing songs of the Return from Oba.² The only man who remains in the village is the chief mortuary official, who may not yet leave the Lodge. In the canoe is placed a small pig and a provision-basket (*mah*) containing food, dress and luxuries for the use of the dead man. The provisions consist of a pudding, and bananas and coconuts of different kinds; the dress, of a penis-wrapper and plaited girdle (*ne-tuu*); and the luxuries, of such modern articles as matches and tobacco, these being, since the arrival of the white man, the invariable companions of every old man.

Arrived at the beach, apparently at any spot, probably at that used by the dead man during his lifetime, they say "*Ra we ra se nu-wak*," "Let us go and launch the canoe," and push it out to sea. All the mortuary officials (except the chief one), and all their kinswomen (*vene na woroan*) who have been associated with them in the Lodge, but no one else, swim out to sea, taking the canoe with them.

When far out in deep water they cry "*Ra teng tuloni e mule*," "We weep as we accompany it (him) on its (his) way," and calling out "*E . . . e . . . e . . . e . . .*" four times they leave the canoe and swim back to shore. Arrived there, a conch-shell trumpet signal is blown with the signal due to a circle-tusker signifying the dead man's rank.

Speiser³ asserts that the canoe is intended to drift over to Ambrim where the honoured dead spend their life after death. However this may be, what actually happens is that the men of the dead man's mother's

¹ For a comprehensive study of these see Rivers, 1, chapter xxvii.

² See p. 321.

³ Speiser, 3, p. 315.

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village, who have been waiting near by in a canoe, take the model mortuary canoe with its provisions in tow and return with it to their own landing-place, where they build a small stone-platform (*na-vot*),¹ and, placing the canoe on it, leave it there until it rots. The stone-platform is carelessly made, being often no more than a heap of stones added to all the similar stone-platforms previously erected for a similar purpose. The food and other articles found in the canoe are appropriated to the use of the maternal relatives. Thus, in addition to a man's soul and his pillow and fan, these things also eventually find their final resting-place in the dead man's mother's village.

If, however, as sometimes happens, the maternal relatives, especially if they belong to another island, neglect to take possession of the canoe, the men of his own village, rather than see it drift aimlessly about, themselves tow it back to their own beach and place it on a previously erected stone-platform.

Last feast of communion; assistant mortuary officials released and kinswomen return home.

In the meantime, those who have been present at the launching of the canoe return to the village. The men take from their ovens the puddings prepared at dawn, and eat them together in the Lodge. This is probably a feast of communion, and is the last of these twice-daily feasts which were instituted on the day of death, and now cease.

All the mortuary officials, except the chief, are now released from their duties. The latter must continue his seclusion in the Lodge until the feast called *Tulagh*, or *Talagh*, which is specially organised to celebrate his first public appearance.

The dead man's married kinswomen (*vene na wooran*), who had left their homes and have been keeping company with the mortuary officials in the Lodge since the day of death, are given baskets full of yams, and now return with these to their husbands.²

MOVABLE FEASTS

Now begins the serious work of going over every day to the gardens on the mainland, to bring home yams and other provender for the series of feasts which are to follow, and the date of which depends solely on the rate at which food can be accumulated and the necessary "properties" prepared. Needless to say, local patriotism demands that these shall be held as quickly and as lavishly as energy and stores will allow.

¹ This word is that generally used for a dolmen, thus showing the close connexion between these two types of monument. The heap of stones in this case is not unlike a cairn.

² Godefroy (1, 1934, p. 52) mentions a sacrifice at the end of a lunar month, and another at the end of six lunar months. I did not record these, and he does no more than mention them.

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BUR-TAMBEAN OR TULO-GOGON

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First part. Exchange of 100 puddings and coconuts between twin-villages.

The first of these is *Bur-tambean*, or *Tulo-gogon*, a ceremony divided into two parts, the first of which may be held on the fifth, sixth or as much as the tenth day after the launching of the canoe. This rite is remarkable in that it concerns only that Side of the Island to which the dead man belongs. My account refers specifically to a death occurring on the Superior Side consisting of the twin-villages of Pete-hul and Togh-vanu.

The first part of the rite consists in an exchange, on successive days, of 100 small puddings, called *na-lok na ghe mer-sean*,¹ "puddings for the old man," and 100 coconuts (in the stages of growth called *na-womp* or *nu-mbut*) between the twin-villages. On the first day 100 of each of these objects are sent to Togh-vanu, and on the second a similar number is returned by Togh-vanu to Pete-hul. Smaller numbers are exchanged out of courtesy with the two small refugee communities of Tolamp and Saraliwe. Nothing is sent to any community on the other Side of the Island.

Second part. Presentation of fowl and yams to every group of males born of a common father and mother.

After this, a day is appointed for the second part of the rite, when the dead man's kinsmen present a fowl and a yam to every group of males on this Side of the Island² who are born of a common father and mother.

This was first represented to me as "gifts to all the *bete-ram*" (eldest sons of their father) in the villages concerned. This statement, however, soon had to be modified when it appeared that the eldest surviving son (such as Vago-lili, see Tolamp genealogy, Table X), who never had been an official *bete-ram*, was among the recipients. Moreover, two sons of different mothers but of the same father could also, in certain cases, each receive a gift, though the second of these could in no case be a *bete-ram* in the official sense. Finally, my informant came out with the full explanation that though it is, as a rule, the first-born sons of common parents who receive each a fowl and a yam, these gifts are not meant for them as individuals, but rather as representatives respectively of each set of sons born of the same two parents on that Side of the Island.

My informant's use of the word *bete-ram* in this connexion will be seen to be very much looser than that defined under the section dealing with the rites in connexion with the birth of an eldest son.³ There, a boy was only a *bete-ram* if he was the first-born son of his father, here the term is extended to include one who is the eldest son of his mother, although his father may have had a previous *bete-ram* by another wife.

¹ Equivalent to the Atchin *lak-wotsnets*.

² Including Tolamp and Saraliwe.

³ See p. 181-2.

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Thus, a man having two sons by two wives will be entitled to three fowls and yams, one for himself and one for each son. Further sons by the same wives do not increase his claim. In the same way, two sons born to the same woman by successive husbands require a fowl and a yam apiece.

Though it is usual for the eldest, or eldest surviving, of a number of brothers to take the part of *bete-ram* and receive the gifts, it is in reality a matter of arrangement between them as to which shall act. For example, Melteg-vanu¹ is entitled to a fowl and yam for himself, and a second for his baby son who is not yet of an age to be able to receive it. Melteg-vanu might feel embarrassed at receiving two fowls while his brothers Rangon and Dominik stood by and received none, and would probably depute Rangon to receive the one due to the three of them as being sons of a common father and mother.²

Though presentation takes place on the public dancing-ground, women may not be there. The masculine character of the proceedings is further emphasised by the naming of the fowls and yams, which are here called respectively *tā-gogon* and *rom-gogon*, the second syllable, *gogon*, being probably equivalent to the Atchin *kon* or *hon* and meaning "taboo" or "holy."³

When all have assembled, the Speaker calls on those entitled to them to come forward and receive their gifts. Then each member of the dead man's Lodge conducts the particular first-born that is his "friend" to the fowl and yam that have been placed ready for him. These then retire to consume the provender, which may on no account touch the lips of one from the other Side of the Island.

The yams may apparently be presented either attached or lone.

A touch of humour may be introduced into the proceedings by the choice, for a group consisting of three or four brothers, of a yam which has three or four tubers attached to the same root. This, however, is only a joke, a single *bete-ram* being often presented with one that has more than one tuber.

TULAGH OR TALOGH

The chief mortuary official issues from his seclusion in the Lodge. Removal of his restrictions on food.

Till now, the chief mortuary official, who washed and prepared the body for burial, has remained secluded in the dead man's Lodge.

¹ See genealogy, Table X.

² Other instances given me from the genealogy were:

Melteg-vanu's son and Ni-sel (2) are entitled to a fowl and yam each, having separate fathers though a common mother. Vago-lili will receive one fowl and yam for himself and a second for his two sons (by the same mother) Tur and Temar. Ni-sel (1) and Mal-sale receive one between them, and Mal-togh one to himself. Ma-taru will receive one for himself, and a second for Wale-kobu and Masing-meria.

³ As distinct from *ghoghon*, which means "bitter."

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769 Among the restrictions connected with his seclusion has been the prohibition against eating anything that has been touched by any woman (except his mothers), and a reciprocal prohibition against any woman eating anything that has been touched by him.

The ceremony of *Tulagh*, or *Talagh*, which now takes place, marks the public removal of these restrictions.

Preparatory to this all the villages of the island come in turn to perform the Rail dance called *Pilagh*¹ in the dancing-ground, though this may on occasion be compounded so that all of them dance on a single occasion together.

When this is over, yams are placed on the dancing-ground for the chief mortuary official and for the visiting villages, as is usual at all such gatherings. When all is ready, and the people are assembled, the chief official, his body oiled and decorated and his face daubed with red paint, comes radiant into the dancing-ground, is seen of all present, and walks down the row of yams, touching them all in turn. This is precisely what is done by women at the *ghor-ghor* ceremony after the Maki.² Here it is done in order to show, by openly touching the yams that are to be distributed far and wide throughout the island, that the restrictions attaching to him in his official capacity are now over.

He now sacrifices with a stick one of the many pigs provided by the dead man's sons as gifts for the visiting villages, and the remaining pigs are then sacrificed by the members of his Lodge and placed with the yam heaps. The dead man's son then pays the chief official for his services with a live circle-tusker. This is called *tuloni talagh*, "recompensing the mortuary official," and a conch-shell trumpet is blown with the correct signal for the pig that has just changed hands.

METE-VUHO

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431 Exchange of yams with those who have eaten parts of the pigs killed in MATEAN.

This, apart from the annual anniversary communion, is the last of all the mortuary rites. It consists in a complimentary exchange of yams with all those who ate the various "cuts" of the pigs (*ghoagh*) which were killed and distributed at the *Matean*.³

An interval of a year or two is allowed to elapse before this exchange takes place, owing to the necessity of waiting for a good crop of yams.

Large numbers of these are collected and arranged in heaps for the various Lodges and villages. Then all those who have eaten parts of the pigs already mentioned arrive with attached- and lone-yams, and going up to their hosts say, "This is for the head" of such and such a pig, "This for the rump" of another, "This for the ribs" of a third, or "This

¹ See pp. 323, 315.² See p. 407.³ See p. 347.

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for such and such a small pig." The giving of these yams is called *ra pangani ghoagh*, "we return food for the pigs." The Speaker then announces that they may take the yams that have been placed ready for them, and they depart, the yams they have been given being roughly equal in size and quality to those that they have brought.

ANNIVERSARY COMMUNION. *HULHULUAN*

There remains only the annual communion rite celebrated on the anniversary of the old man's death, held every year so long as the memory of him is kept alive. The anniversary day is called *Simbean*, and the feast *Hulhuluan*. The day of the moon on which he died is remembered, and the moon itself is recognised by whether death occurred at the time of the new yams or the season of the *na-viho* fruit tree or some such natural event connected with the native calendrical system.

On the anniversary itself there are three communion rites, the first and last with a pudding, and the second and central rite of the whole proceeding with a kava root (*malogh*). Kava is not drunk in the Small Islands (though it is said to be by the Big Nambas in the interior of the mainland), but it is used on various occasions during the Maki and also for magic. So far as I know, this is the only occasion on which it is placed in the mouth. The tenor of the petitions offered by the living to the deceased after the communion is that the latter may do them no harm, protect them from evil and give them increase in pigs.

Only the men of the dead man's Quarter take part in this rite, though a general feast for the whole Side of the Island is made on the following day.

Morning communion with pudding. Petitions to dead man.

On the morning of the anniversary a small pudding is made by the men of the dead man's Quarter in their Lodge. When cooked, it is taken out of the oven and cut up into small pieces. Each man holds a piece in his hand, with which to communicate. No one says "*Ghire*" as is done on other occasions, because they are seated so close together as to make it unnecessary. They watch one another, and at one moment each bites off a morsel, saying "*Na . . . long . . . ki*," "The pudding," drawing the word out. Then the presiding man offers a petition to the dead man, beginning always with the customary formula "*Ta-mat wurogh*," "Ghost, stay quiet," with which all communion prayers begin.¹ As an example of the petitions offered on this occasion my informant gave the

¹ The same formula is uttered every time a yam-pudding (*na-longk*) is eaten, as a kind of grace. The same holds true of the Banks Islands, of which Codrington (3, p. 271) says, "At ordinary meals when the oven is opened a bit of food is put aside for the dead, with the words 'This is for you, let our oven be well cooked.'"

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769 following: "Stay quiet, do not harm us. If any harmful thing approaches, let it go away, let it not come close to us. Give us long life; let us live to a good old age, as you did. Give us plenty of pigs. Give us circle-tuskers, re-entrant-tuskers, curved-tuskers, crescent-tuskers."

Message-yams (*na-mbüt*), specially adorned with the scented herbs called *hakaul*, to announce the occasion, are now placed outside each Quarter-Lodge on this Side of the Island, so that the members of those Lodges shall find them in the evening on their return from the mainland, and be reminded of the occasion.

Chief communion with kava stick. Petitions to dead man.

After the placing of these yams now takes place the central rite of the day, the feast of communion with the kava stick. Pieces of this are broken off, and each man of the dead man's Quarter holds one to his mouth. Catching one another's eyes, they all at one time bite off a tiny piece. But they don't like the taste of it, and having uttered a long-drawn-out "*Ma ... lo ... ghi*" ("kava") they spit it out. Then they all repeat the formula "*Ta-mat wurogh*," "Ghost, stay quiet," and one man will address the ghost of the dead man, saying, "This is your day, do not let anything harm us. If anything harmful approaches, send it away. If war approaches, turn it from us. If sickness approaches, turn it from us. . . ." If any man has anything to say, he will say it. Apparently all the petitions are of a general nature, a man not daring to ask for particular benefits.

Evening communion, with pudding.

After this, a large pudding is made, with luxuries like fowls and fish caught during the previous day and night, and is placed in the oven. The members of the Lodge remain on the island all day, and in the evening the pudding is taken out and a third communion is made.

Next day. Rom van-van. Pudding eaten by all men of dead man's Side of the Island.

Participation in the anniversary communion is reserved for the men of the dead man's own Lodge. On the following day, however, a feast called *Rom van-van* is held embracing the male population of the whole of this Side of the Island. Small puddings are eaten in the morning, as on the previous day, by the members of the dead man's Lodge. Then more yams—not decorated message-yams, as on the day before, but attached-and lone-yams for eating—are presented to the Lodges of the remaining Quarters of the twin-village and the strangers living on their land. All the men of this Side of the Island stay at home all day, make a pudding out of the yams, and eat it in the evening.

An important condition attaches to this feast. It may only take place in the case of the anniversary falling at the season of new yams, when food

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is scarce, for it is necessary to be certain that every piece shall be eaten. If yams are plentiful, it might happen by oversight that, not being immediately cooked, one of the yams might be replanted and that the resulting new yams might at some later date be eaten by a woman. This would be a terrible thing to happen to yams in any way connected with the feast of communion with the dead.

Of the two days, the actual anniversary, *Simbean*, is the only one having true ritual importance. The second, *Rom van-van*, is "only for eating."

Taboo on fruit now lifted.

If any fruit (such as *naviho*) is in season at the time of the death of a *mer-sean* a taboo is placed on it, to be observed by both men and women, and is not lifted till the morning of the first anniversary, when it is cooked in the first of the puddings eaten in the Lodge.

SPECIAL SACRIFICE ON TENTH ANNIVERSARY

According to Godefroy, anniversary communions continue until the tenth year after death, when a special sacrifice takes place. He gives, however, no further details.

MORTUARY RITES FOR A YOUNG MAN

The following notes on the death of a young man are very sketchy, and were taken down before I was aware of the age-grades stated above, and before obtaining the account of the mortuary rites for a *mer-sean*. Such comparisons as I have been able to make, therefore, have been made while writing it up, when it was too late to ask any of the many questions that present themselves.

BURIAL

When a young man dies his face is painted red¹ and he is wrapped in money-mats (*mangau*) and buried extended, at any time of day, in his own house, either at the Lower Side (*tosan atan*) or across the closed end of the house with his head to the Lower Side. Before he is lowered into the grave, a small live pig is thrown in. This pig is called *e tulo goni*,² "it accompanies him on his way." The dead man's body is then lowered into the grave, and immediately this has been done there takes place the sacrifice of a pig called *e mule ghini*, "he goes home," presumably the "death pig" sacrificed for presentation to the Guardian Ghost.

¹ Godefroy, 1, 1934, p. 52.

² An old man's face is painted black. See p. 540.

³ If the dead man is very young, this is omitted.

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Ber-mavel, signifying the separation of the head from the body.¹ In reality the head remains untouched. This rite is doubtless connected with the new forms of belief in which seven days, and not five, is the dead man's period of probation. In Wala it is said of the dead on the Ambrim volcano that their heads fall off and their bones fall asunder every dawn till they join together again the following evening, but that this does not happen to the newly arrived ghost till the Seventh Day after his death.² The coconut leaf thrown on to the grave corresponds with the coconut placed on it in Lambumbu on the ninth day. This coconut represents the dead man's soul, and on the tenth day it is thrown out to sea, since it is on that day that the ghost is believed to set out for the Land of the Dead.³ 764

MATEAN

The death feast called *Matean* takes place, as in the case of an old man, at a variable date and not too long after death. 769

Five days before, "counters" called *na-mbet* are distributed among the members of the dead man's Lodge, binding each to bring a given number of yams. The pigs to be killed on the morrow are reviewed, by being tied to posts erected within the house-enclosure. There is no pudding, as there is on the corresponding occasion after the death of an old man, because the relatives are sad that the young man has died before his time.

Large pig killed and given to mother's brother.

Next morning the pigs are taken to the dancing-ground, and attached and lone-yams are laid out for the visitors. These now assemble from all the villages in the island, and a pig is killed for each village represented. These pigs are called *ghoagh* or *gohoghins*. Then a large pig, here called *ne-numbe*, is killed and given to the people of the dead man's mother's village, though this is not so strictly observed here as on Atchin, only a small pig being sometimes killed for the mother's people, while the large pig is given to the dead man's "great friend."⁴ Other pigs, dead and alive, the former all called *ne-numbe* and the latter *wol-wolean*, are given to all his "friends" "in payment for his death."

Some of the visitors have brought gifts of money-mats (*mangau*). All present are now paid with mats "for having cried" for the dead man, and the sacrificial signal is sounded on the gongs for the pigs that have been killed.

¹ *Ber* is equivalent to the Atchin *mpar*, meaning "ripe": *mavel* may be the same as the Atchin *mambur*, "broken off."

² See pp. 230, 532.

³ Deacon, 4, p. 570.

⁴ Who this "great friend" may be is a matter which I unfortunately did not look into. On this subject with regard to Seniang see Deacon, 4, p. 538.

STONE MEN OF MALEKULA

METE-VUHO

RETURN FEAST FOR MATEAN

769 The return feast for the *Matean*, called *Mete-vuho*, only occurs if the young man who has died was old enough to have adopted the wearing of a special bark-board belt of the type called *tue nigh*. Otherwise it is omitted.

FOURTEENTH DAY

As in the case of an old man, the Fourteenth Day after death is an important one. On the previous evening, a special pudding, called *lok na-lang*, is placed cooked in the dead man's house, to be eaten the following day in a specially constructed hut made of coconut leaves set up in one of the places reserved for this purpose by the side of the public road. This hut, like that set up at the death of an old man, is called *ne'im a na-lok na-lang*, "the house of the *na-lang* pudding."

Early on the morning of the Fourteenth Day, before the sun is yet up, two men go to this hut and, breaking off part of a cane (*maruure*) which has been planted there, return to the village, one of them trailing this cane on the ground behind him, while the other blows plain blasts on a conch-shell trumpet. They go straight to the dead man's house, where his mother, wife and daughters have been sleeping since his death. The two men halt in front of the house, and when the women, awakened by the blasts on the conch shell, open the door the man who has been dragging the cane goes in and throws it down on the grave. The other then lays aside his conch and, having cried *I . . . i . . . i . . . i . . .* four times in a high falsetto voice, falls to weeping loudly. Then the women, and the man who had brought the cane, all start weeping. The man with the conch goes straight away, the man who had brought the cane cries till he is tired and then departs, and the women weep till daybreak.

Meanwhile, hearing the trumpet-blasts, all the male relatives of the dead man have rushed to his house. Two or three of them go inside and take out the pudding which was placed to cook the night before, and they all then repair to the hut which has been built by the roadside, and eat it. The pudding *must* be eaten before daylight. If it is so large that they cannot eat it all so quickly, which is usually the case, the remains must be scattered about the bush so that when day breaks there is nothing left. Then they all go down to the shore to bathe.

At dawn, the women leave the dead man's house, taking with them the yams which have been left them by the men, and return to their own houses.¹

¹ According to another account, it is not till the Thirtieth Day that the women "put coconut leaves on the grave, shut up the house, and go away."

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(There is no launching of a canoe, as is the case for an old man. The whole evening and morning ceremony gives the impression of something to which the young man is not properly entitled, an imitation of the rites due to an old man, to which the younger has no right, but which is tolerated by the community so long as it is carried out *sub rosa* and no traces of it are thrust upon the public consciousness. Thus, the hut must be built by the side of the road instead of in the dancing-ground; the cane thrown on the grave evidently represents the circular fence made out of canes erected for an old man; the crying four times followed by weeping may be in imitation of the fourfold cries and weeping at the launching of the canoe; lastly, the whole of the pudding must, in the case of a young man, be finished or hidden before dawn.)

769

PERIOD OF MOURNING

The period of mourning (*taurean*) lasts for thirty, forty or one hundred days, or a year or longer, according to choice, all the dead man's kinsmen, both male and female, having to fast or abstain (*vel-val*) during this time from eating certain yams.

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(This presumably corresponds to the taboo on fruit in the case of an old man.)

END OF PERIOD OF FASTING

When it is decided to put an end to this period of mourning, a day is appointed for a rite called *nagham hinagh*. The immediate relatives of the dead man lay out fowls, pigs, yams, bananas, etc., in the house-enclosure and give them to all those who have been abstaining.

OTHER PROCEDURE OMITTED

There are no mortuary officials (*talagh*) in the mortuary rites for a young man, nor is there any *Bur-tambean* or *Tulagh* rite nor any anniversary rite nor any communion feast such as takes place after the death of an old man.

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WOMEN

WOMEN'S AGE AND DEGREE NAMES

Age-grades:

All women are called *Vavine*, and this term is used in reference and address for all those who have not yet received complimentary titles in connexion with the *Maki*.

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